1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
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CHAPTER V

BURIAL AND FUNERAL CUSTOMS

764 There appear to have been two distinct methods of burial among the Winnebago—simple inhumation and platform burial. Within recent times, owing to the influence of their Algonquian neighbors, [177] platform burial has entirely disappeared and inhumation alone is practiced. It has even become customary to erect a typical Algonquian burial-hut over the grave (see pl. 54, b).

[615] When the old culture was still intact inhumation was definitely associated with the lower phratry and platform burial with the upper phratry. Whether this marked difference in burial customs was merely another example of that specialization in function so characteristic of these two divisions of the tribe, or whether it was due to distinct historical origins, it is difficult to determine. I am, however, inclined to regard the latter interpretation as by far the most probable.

[614-184] All the customs are described in full detail in the various accounts that follow and in Chapters VII and VIII. Each clan seems to have had a few details peculiar to itself, but, in the main, the rights were identical. They may briefly be divided into the following sections:

1. Preparation of the body for burial. 2. Rites in the house of the deceased, consisting mainly of speeches of consolation to the bereaved. 3. Speeches addressed to the deceased and the narration of the myth of the journey to spirit land. 4. Rites at the grave. 5. The recounting of war exploits by specially invited warriors, at the grave. 6. The elaborate four nights wake at the home of the deceased.

Description of Funeral Customs and Wake

[115-644] Informant, member of the Thunderbird clan:[1] When an individual dies his relatives get some one to bury him and the chief mourner will also invite some person to talk to the corpse before it is buried. The person addressing the dead man or woman tells the deceased how he is to go (to spirit land) and what he is to do on the way there. The body is then dressed by the person who is going to bury it. All the relatives come to the lodge and the deceased is dressed in his best clothes; beads are put around his neck, bracelets on his wrist, rings

[1] This description is a generalized one.

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765 539 "They told me to follow the four steps that would be imprinted with blue marks, grandmother." "Well, grandson, you are young but you are wise. It is good. I will now boil some food for you."

775 Thus she will speak to you and then put a kettle on the fire and boil some rice for you. If you eat it you will have a headache. Then she will say, "Grandson, you have a headache, let me cup it for you." Then she will break open your skull and take out your brains and you will forget all about your people on earth and where you came from. You will not worry about your relatives. You will become like a holy spirit. Your thoughts will not go as far as the earth, as there will be nothing carnal about you.

Now the rice that the old woman will boil will really be lice. For that reason you will be finished with everything evil. Then you will go on stepping in the four footsteps mentioned before and that were imprinted with blue earth. You are to take the four steps because the road will fork there. All your relatives (who died before you) will be there. As you journey on you will come to a fire running across the earth from one end to the other. There will be a bridge across it but it will be difficult to cross because it is continually swinging. However, you will be able to cross it safely, for you have all the guides about whom the warriors spoke to you. They will take you over and take care of you.

Well, we have told you a good road (to take). If anyone tells a falsehood in speaking of the spirit road, you will fall off the bridge and be burned. However (you need not worry) for you will pass over safely. As you proceed from that place the spirits will come to meet you and take you to the village where the chief lives. There you will give him the tobacco and ask for those objects of which we spoke to you, the same you asked of the old woman. There you will meet all the relatives that died before you. They will be living in a large lodge. This you must enter. He-o-o, ha-a-a.

764 [115 617] GENERALIZED DESCRIPTION OF FUNERAL CUSTOMS AND WAKE

Informant, member of Bear clan. When a person died a member of his friend (*kitenkdro*) clan was immediately sent for, who took charge of the body and of all the funeral arrangements. The overseer dressed the deceased in his best clothes and all his finery, for it was said that he was going on a long journey. Then some clansman painted the dead man's face with the clan markings and delivered a speech to the corpse. When he concluded the clan songs were sung and the body was carried to the grave. All the mourners marched in single file. After the body had been buried or placed on a scaffold, as the case might be, a post was placed at the head of the grave, and the warriors among the mourners counted their coups and drew representations of their victories on the posts. [775] The purpose of the warriors in counting coups at the grave was to put at the disposal of the deceased the spirits of all the enemies they had killed, and also to give him additional strength for overcoming the obstacles on the road to the spirit land. Food was placed on the little shelf in front of the window of the grave-house, to be used by the spirit during the four days that he hovered around this earth before departing on his journey. Then a light was lighted and finally, toward evening, all departed for their homes, returning as they had come, in single file,

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721 When a man went on a warpath for the sake of glory he generally led a large party and all sorts of special arrangements were made, because then a war leader was necessary and volunteers were always needed. It is believed that the same holds true for larger war parties.

In discussing the essential requisite for a successful war party we have stated that a special blessing was necessary for this purpose. There is, however, one noteworthy exception to this rule, if we are [614 to accept the statements of members of the upper phratry—all mem- 615] bers of the Warrior clan may go on a warpath without fasting and without receiving a blessing. This statement was vigorously denied by members of the lower phratry.

727 When a war party returns, a very interesting ceremony takes place. At some distance from the village a victorious war party sends a messenger ahead to tell all those at home that the war party has been unsuccessful and that all have been killed, and that those at home should put on mourning. Secretly, however, the leader tells someone to look for a pole for the Victory dance, and shortly after all the preparations for mourning have been made the victorious warriors rush into the village. Before entering the village that warrior who [555] has counted first coup is offered a pipe, from which he always takes a few puffs. The same pipe is then handed to the one who counted coup second, and so on, until the fourth man is reached. Then the prizes (*wuiʒewu*) are given to the victors, who afterwards give them to their sisters. The scalps are not taken into the village, but are left outside, and warriors who have remained at home rush out to count coup upon them. Then the scalps are carried around the village four times.

555 726 The widely-known Plains custom of "counting coup" is also practiced among the Winnebago. The individual who strikes the dead body of the enemy first obtains the first honor, the one striking it second the second honor, the one striking it third the third honor, and the one who actually killed the enemy obtaining the fourth and least important honor.

721 The following are descriptions given in the words of the informants:

[115 *Description of war customs and the manner of conducting a war party.*—Informant, member of the Thunderbird clan.

When a man is ready to go on the warpath, he looks around for as many men as he wishes to take along and then gives a feast. At the feast he fixes the time at which the war party is to start. The man giving the feast (i. e., the leader of the war party) would get up and tell those present that he intended going on a warpath and give his reason; then he would say that whomever so desired could come along.

Many went along. Indeed, there was quite a crowd. The first stopping place (*hiʔiyara*) was always near the outskirts of the village. There the leader appointed four men to go after food and wood for the fire. During their absence two camping places would be arranged, one on each side of the war leader. As soon as the four men returned with the food the attendants skinned and prepared the animals for

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727 etc. Then the war leader would secretly tell some one to select a stake (for the Victory Dance) and after a short time all the members of the war party would rush in and march around the entire village striking the scalps that they had tied to sticks. Then they would all go to the place where the stake had been put up and there they would distribute the war prizes to the sisters of the men who had won them and the women would walk around proudly with the prizes around their necks. Then, in the daytime 701 they would dance the Victory Dance and in the evening they would dance the 721 Hoc'ixere Dance for four nights.

[115] *Description of a war party.*—Informant, member of the Thunderbird clan.

[787] If a man wishes to go on the warpath he must fast and be blessed by the spirits in a specific manner. If a man is thus blessed, he gives a feast and announces his intention of leading a war party. The chief always has a representative at such a feast (a member of the Buffalo clan), and as soon as it is over this man goes to the former and reports [622] to him. If the chief thinks that the blessing is insufficient and might cause the death of many men he takes the war leader's pipe and lays it across his path and the war leader is then compelled to abandon his undertaking. This action on the part of the chief is sacred and must be accepted as final. The war leader dare not step across the pipe. Should the chief, however, not do this, then the war leader knew that there was no objection. Usually some members of every clan go along, but especially members of the Thunderbird, Warrior, and Bear clans.

The action of the war leader is controlled by many rules. He must be the one who has fasted and been blessed with all that is essential for conducting a war party. He must have his food provided for him by the spirits, know the exact location of the enemy, their numbers, and their sex.

726 After the war party has traveled for about four days, the men offer tobacco to the 701 leader and he tells them where he is going, the number of the enemy, etc. If, after that, any of the members of the war party do not approve of the undertaking then they place a pipe across his path and the war leader is compelled to return. If nothing is said, then all is well. The war leader always goes ahead of his party and his attendants behind him, followed by the other members of the party. Whenever the chief stops his attendants run to his side, take his war bundle and place it in front of him. Then the leader sits down, neither turning to the right nor to the left but looking straight ahead. The attendants get two poles and place them on each side of him, bend the ends over to form an arch, on each side of which are placed small oak sticks arranged in a row. Under this structure the war leader stays. Here he sleeps and is [614] fed by his attendants. No one is permitted to go ahead of this improvised structure. On each side of him two fireplaces are placed, two for the Upper clans and two for the Lower clans. If the war party is traveling westward the two fireplaces on the north side belong to the Lower clans and the two on the south side to the Upper clans. If a man is going on a warpath for the first time, he stays in the rear of the party and has a little fire of his own. He remains in the rear in this way until the battle begins. Then he joins the others.

A member of the Warrior clan is selected by the war leader to act as guard and he goes back and forth behind him encouraging the men and telling them not to steal away alone or go too far ahead of the party, since that always results in the loss of life. It is for this reason that it is not considered correct for a man to try and steal away and perhaps obtain a war honor in this selfish manner. Whenever the war leader stops he tells his companions what they must do in order to obtain food, all this information having been provided for in his blessing. If he tells some one to go to a certain place and kill a deer, he is certain to find a deer at the place specified. Whenever the war leader gets up and steps over his war bundle the attendants come and place his war [782] bundle on his back and he then proceeds on his march, followed by the other members of the party. Whenever he comes to a river he takes some of the tobacco which is

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616 ceremonial connections: first, in the organization of the village;
614 second, in the arrangement of the clans while on the warpath; third, as the basis of organization at the "chief" feast; and lastly, as the basis of organization of the ceremonial lacrosse game.

616 According to the majority of the older people, when the old social
614 organization was still intact, each village was divided into two halves
621 by an imaginary line running due northwest and southeast, the *waŋgereci* clans dwelling in one half, with the chief's lodge in the south, and the *manegi* clans dwelling in the other half, with the bear or soldier lodge in the north (fig. 33). Although this arrangement has now become almost legendary, it was corroborated by many of the older people. To what extent every village was organized on this basis it is impossible to state. When this question was

directly put to individuals, the answer was always in the affirmative. Quite a number of old individuals, however, denied vigorously that such had ever been the organization of the village, and claimed instead that the lodges of the Chief and the Soldier (Bear) clan were in the center of the village (fig. 34).

[116] In looking over the clan affiliations of the informants, we noticed, however, that the first arrangement was always given by members of the bird clans, and the second arrangement by members of the
[114] Bear clan and generally also by others on the *manegi* side. This fact, of course, makes the decision as to the relationship of these two types of village organization quite difficult. There can be no
[582] question as to the existence of a twofold division of the tribe as far as marital relations were concerned, nor as to the segregation of specific clans in different villages.

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10. *ire*, buffalo.
11. *ke*, fish.
12. *wak'a*, snake.

Another list was obtained in which only 10 clans were mentioned, the Fish and the Snake being omitted. The clans omitted are, however, regarded by all as of recent origin.

There are two older lists of Winnebago clans obtained by Morgan[1] and Dorsey.[2] Morgan gives the following clans: 614 1114

Wolf.	Eagle.	Snake.
Bear.	Elk.	Thunder.
Buffalo.	Deer.	

Dorsey's list is more complete, although owing to the fact that he did not know of the existence of the twofold division, he classes the four Bird clans as subclans of one larger Bird clan. His list differs from the author's only in the absence of the Fish clan and in the fact that he was still able to obtain two archaic names for the Wolf and Bear clans. Dorsey's list follows:

Wolf.	Bird.	Buffalo.
Bear.	*a*. Eagle.	Deer.
Elk.	*b*. Pigeon.	Water-monster.
Snake.	*c*. Hawk.	
	d. Thunderbird.	

Foster gives a grouping of the clans according to the fauna.[3] His list hardly was intended as an enumeration of the clans. According to Foster, we have the following grouping:

I. Thunderbird family or invisible Thunderbird people.
II. The air family, the visible Thunderbird people.
III. The land or quadruped family.
IV. The water family.

An interesting variant of the names of the Thunderbird and Warrior clans was given by one informant. He called the Thunderbird the good thunders, and the Warrior the bad thunders. This is strikingly reminiscent of the Menominee and was perhaps borrowed from them. 614 [115 177]

The main differences in the above lists are the order of the clans, the position of the Wolf clan, the presence of a general Bird clan called *wawigi* by Dorsey, the double names for the Wolf and Bear clans, and the absence of a Fish and Warrior clan in Dorsey's and of a Hawk clan in the list obtained by the author.

The position of the Wolf clan, in spite of Morgan's and Dorsey's agreement, does not belong in the place assigned to it by them. In all probability their main informant was a member of this clan who wished to give his clan a greater importance than properly belonged

[1] Ancient Society, p. 167.
[2] Siouan Sociology. Fifteenth Ann. Rept. Bur. Amer. Ethn., pp. 249-251.
[3] Quoted in J. O. Dorsey's MSS. of Winnebago clan names (B. A. E.).

7: Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

Preface

There is only one way—to have a native himself give the account in his own mother tongue. The problem then resolves itself into finding the native. That is the task I set myself and through a piece of good luck I succeeded in accomplishing it. As the manner of its accomplishment is an interesting and illuminating story in itself, I hope I shall be excused for telling it in some detail.

In the year 1909 I commenced field investigations among the Winnebago Indians living on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River, about twenty-five miles south of Sioux City, Iowa. These Indians had the reputation of being fairly conservative. Perhaps the fact that a Presbyterian mission had in seventeen years succeeded in converting only one family, and a family which then unkindly died without leaving issue, may bear this out.

Among these Indians there lived a family named Blow Snake, consisting of a father and a fair number of children all grown up. Two of these were men quite well known in the tribe for a variety of reasons. These two became my principal informants. They had lived the most exciting of lives, for to the usual round of adventures that fall to the lot of most Indians of that region now, they had added a murder and a conversion, the murder first and the conversion afterwards. The older of the two seemed to be by far the more gifted. His memory was simply prodigious. He recounted to me a ceremony which took him two months, working practically six hours a day, to tell

9? Morgan E-5 (1859) 1959 NP12 Winnebago NP12

[*Winnebago*] *Medicine Dance*

115 I met Judge Williams[97] this evening and listened among other things to a very fine description of a medicine dance among the Winnebagoes. He is District Judge of Kansas, and has held the same office in Iowa and been with the Indians for 25 years. He superintended the removal of the Sauks and Foxes etc.

He was invited by the Winnebagoes as a compliment to attend a medicine dance, or the Spirit Dance.[98] This is a religious organization which the Judge likens to our church. They initiate with forms and ceremonies each neophyte, and at that time go through with their high religious performances. The Judge says they have mesmerism

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[P.60(A)]

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97 ^ 98 ^ [see category 116 - p210. Analyst]

764 the Judge asked what this meant they told
775 him that it was for the spirit to pass through in going out and in.

771 He never found among them during the long period of his intercourse any evidence of sun worship, and thinks it fell far short of that in which I agree with him.

115 This morning I had a further conversation with Judge Walker, who is a regular medicine man of the Wyandottes. He says
776 the name of the Spirit of Medicine among
171 the Wyandottes is Mon-ane-tow, who is the same as the Manitou of the Ojibways etc. That this spirit of Medicine is a good spirit etc. He says that the initiations described
796 by Judge Williams are in the presence only
575 of medicine men and women. The people of the tribe are not allowed to be present. That both men and women are members, and are regularly initiated before they can become members. That no oath of secrecy is required, as the Indian knows nothing about oaths, but they initiate on the honor of the man and of the woman, choosing such only as are known to be of good character for integrity. That the Society and its pro-
[755] ceedings are secret, except these ceremonies which medicine men perform on patients for their cure.

796 Walker says that these ceremonies pro-
575 ceed upon the idea that a violent shock of
828 the nervous system, which prostrates it en-
158 tirely will also prostrate or relax the hold of the disease. They know by experience that by fasting and steaming they so arouse and excite a well person as to produce a shock which will throw him to the earth. This is done at the ceremony of initiation which Judge Williams described. It is done by nervous excitement, and Indian faith in these ceremonies, and is repeated over every initiate as a proof of the possession by medicine men of this marvellous power. He

[P 61 (A)]

9: Morgan E-5 (1859) 1959 NP12 Winnebago NP12

115 97. Joseph Williams, born in Pennsylvania in 1801, served as associate justice in Iowa Territory and state. In 1857 he was appointed associate justice of Kansas Territory by President Buchanan; he served until 1861. He made his home in Ft. Scott; died in 1870. For an account of some of Williams' activities in Kansas in the fall of 1859 and 1860, see *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1915–18*, XIV, 205–6, 230; *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1901–02*, VII, 402.

[113]

796 575 98. This is probably one of the earliest accounts of the Winnebago Medicine Dance, performed by a secret society in summer only. Its purpose is to prolong life and to cultivate certain nonmartial virtues. The Winnebago Medicine Dance is closely related to the Algonquian Midéwiwin, to the Dakota "Mystery Dance," and to the Omaha "Pebble Ceremony." See "The Ritual and Significance of the Winnebago Medicine Dance," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, XXIV (1911): 149–208, and *The Winnebago Tribe* (Bureau of American Ethnology, 37th Annual Report, 1923), both by Dr. Paul Radin; see also "Winnebago," in *Handbook of American Indians*, edited by Hodge.

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4:Smith N-5 (1928) 1929 NP12 Winnebago NP12

and coffee, which were, of course, unknown to them before the coming of the White Man. Other tribes in Wisconsin have made no attempt to set up their own words for these, but call them by their English names as nearly as they can pronounce them. This trait of the Winnebago is often amusing. For example the watermelon was unknown to them until about seventy-five years ago. The first recipient of a watermelon among them considered it a pumpkin, cut it up into small pieces, and boiled it in a pot. The resultant product was scarcely edible, so led to the appellation of "wicawasukela"—"a pumpkin that did'nt get ripe." But later, they discovered that the whites ate them just as they were; and upon trying this they discovered their merit, and have been very fond of them ever since. But the first name stuck, and it is thus called to this day.

While we had met Winnebago before this summer, we had never attempted to discourse at length on their uses of plants. In 1923, we first met Frank Smith, "makiwika," with his wife who was making baskets, in Minocqua where we admired her art. Every year since we have seen Frank at some Indian pow-wow or other. During the "Pageant of Progress," in Milwaukee, July, 1926, Frank and his new Ojibwe wife were at the Indian Village on the lake front, with Mr. H. L. Mumm, of Wausau, demonstrating Indian arts and crafts. There, too, we met two other Winnebago workers, Jim Henniger and his wife, although the Indians in the village proper were all full-blooded Ojibwe from Lac Court Oreilles, Wisconsin. The museum is also fortunate in having the friendship of Ulysses A. White, of Wisconsin Rapids, who was formerly employed in Milwaukee. Mr. White is a pure blooded Winnebago, as is his wife, a quite uncommon occurrence in these times of inter-tribal marriages. He introduced to the Museum, John Bear, of Wisconsin Rapids, another old Winnebago Indian, through whom Mr. W. C. McKern, Associate Curator of Anthropology, of the Museum, has been able to collect some interesting ancient Winnebago stories. Mr. Bear spent the entire winter of 1927-1928 at the Museum, and was helped in his work by Mr. White. All of this preliminary work was the subject of several conferences between the writer and Mr. McKern at which we became acquainted with the linguistics of the Winnebago and listed the plant names used in the various stories.

The first trip of the summer was to Trempealeau, where the Museum was conducting archeological investigations which the writer, as President of the Wisconsin Archeological Society, wished to see. Furthermore Mr. McKern had written that there were Winnebago Indians in Trempealeau. These proved to be a family living in the old brewery at the edge of the village, but they were from Winnebago, Nebraska, and were not familiar with the Wisconsin plants. The field party, however, interested us for a week. The Museum camp was established in Perrot State Park, on the banks of the Trempealeau River near its

4:Smith N-5 (1928) 1929 NP12 Winnebago NP12

junction with the Mississippi. Dr. Evan D. Pierce, of Trempealeau, who was in charge of the park, was much interested in the native flora as well as in archeology, and we made a collection of ninety species then in bloom. Mr. Towne L. Miller, of Fairwater, Wisconsin, Honorary Curator of Archeology of the Museum collected the plants of the region throughout the season, for the Department of Botany.

The Winnebago Indians are found today scattered over the central part of Wisconsin, principally in Marquette, Waushara, Portage, Sauk, Juneau, Adams, Marathon, Wood, Clark, Jackson, and Monroe counties. Wood County with permanent settlements in Arpin, Vesper, Pittsville, Walker, Elm Lake, Dexterville, and Babcock, contains the largest number, about 750. Along the Hemlock River, not far from Pittsville, are found other large settlements of farming Winnebago. In other counties good-sized settlements are located at Neillsville, Wittenberg, Wyeville, Black River Falls, Hatfield, and Tomah. Their Indian agency and school are located at the last mentioned city.

Our chief location during the summer was at A. White's farm, on the Walker Road, six and a half miles south of Wisconsin Rapids. When we arrived, Mr. White was at Kilbourn where many of the Winnebago camp during the tourist season, making baskets and bead work, and taking part in dances and entertainments. Jim Henniger and his wife, our pageant friends, were there, caring for her father, Dave Dekorah, a prominent man in the medicine lodge, who was sick. He afterwards died and was buried in their community graveyard, with Indian ceremony. The Whites made us welcome and we pitched our tent in a grove of white pines not far from their spring. There were several other Winnebago Indians near at hand, including Henry Dick, from Briggsville. Henry is important in the medicine society and immediately made friends with us and started to teach us the Winnebago language. He was especially bitter against the peyote cult, which many Winnebago have embraced, declaring that peyote was worse than whiskey, because a man drunk on whiskey, would be sober the next morning and able to go to work, whereas with peyote, he became "crazy", and would not work for four or five days while under its influence. He further said that the peyote cult worshippers never possess anything, but live on their industrious neighbors who belong to the medicine lodge. These medicine lodge Indians raise potatoes, corn, beans, carrots, hay, grain, hogs and chickens, according to Henry, and would not let their own people starve, but did not like the shiftlessness of the peyote worshippers. He wished he could see the President of the United States to tell him not to let any Indian have peyote. He thinks bad days are coming to the peyote-eating Indians. A few years ago, this cactus drug, most of which comes from Texas, sold for $4.00 a thousand buttons, but the current prices in 1928 were $25 per thousand of number one size; $30.00 per thousand for number two size; and